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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0541
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0518
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0193
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0117
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1158
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0807
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 UNVIE VIENNA 000165

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [IAEA](#) [KNPP](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: IAEA: WEOG STONEWALLS ON ISRAEL,S MEMBERSHIP
REQUEST

REF: A) 07 STATE 168186 B) 07 UNVIE 693

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte for reasons 1.4 b and d

Summary

11. (C) Following up on the effort during the U.S. WEOG Chairmanship last fall (Ref B) to extend membership to Israel, the Australian Chair relayed a formal request from Israel to the group. In a February 19 WEOG meeting, Ireland, New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and Finland raised reservations though they claimed to be open to continued discussion of Israel's request. The principal objections were that Israel had been admitted to WEOG only for electoral purposes in other UN fora, and that IAEA-WEOG deliberations on Middle East issues would be constrained. EU members also sought an EU decision on the issue of admitting Israel and questioned the purpose of the IAEA-WEOG. Israel has proposed "mutually agreed modalities" for discussion of Middle East issues. However, Israeli Ambassador Michaeli believes there are much deeper objections on the part of some WEOG members and is inclined to not push the issue of Israel's membership, which could provoke a divisive WEOG debate. End summary.

WEOG Not Receptive

12. (C) The IAEA WEOG group held consultations February 19 on a formal request from the Government of Israel that it be accorded full membership. In a February 14 letter to the Australian WEOG Chair (text para 8), Israeli Ambassador Michaeli noted Israel's exclusion from the MESA group and its inclusion in WEOG in other UN fora. Israel also offered to accommodate "possible sensitivities and concerns" on the part of some WEOG members regarding General Conference (GC) deliberations on Middle East issues through "mutually agreed modalities." Ambassador Schulte also summarized a letter he had sent to WEOG members as the outgoing Chair in December that addressed questions and concerns raised in prior WEOG consultations (Ref B). He explained WEOG's informal consultative status at the IAEA and other precedents for Israel's representation in WEOG within the UN system, consistent with Ref A guidance. Ambassador Schulte appealed to WEOG members to admit Israel, which was the only country not a member of any group.

13. (C) Ireland and New Zealand voiced reservations as they

had previously (Ref B), along with Switzerland, Spain, Sweden and Finland, though they all claimed to be open to further discussion of Israel's request. Only Norway expressed strong principled support for accommodating Israel. Ireland and Finland observed that precedents for Israel's inclusion in WEOG in New York and elsewhere were for electoral purposes only, whereas the IAEA-WEOG does not have a formal electoral function under the IAEA Statute. Sweden unhelpfully added that in New York, it was "completely forbidden" for Israel to take part in any WEOG consultations not related to elections.

The Swedish PR likened the IAEA-WEOG more to the Geneva Human Rights Council where Israel is excluded from WEOG because Israel-related resolutions are discussed. Ireland, Finland and New Zealand echoed concerns about Israel's participation in substantive IAEA-WEOG deliberations on Middle East issues during the General Conference. New Zealand was unconvinced that Israel was "like-minded" on these issues. (Note: Tel Aviv has advised Michaeli that Israel participates in UNGA First Committee deliberations on Middle East issues as part of a WEOG-subgroup in New York, but UNVIE has not been able to confirm this. End note)

¶4. (C) Spain and Sweden also cited the need for an EU decision on Israel's participation in WEOG. Stockholm questioned the whole purpose of WEOG in Vienna, a matter that the Nordic Group and the EU should consider. Spain said that it would follow up with the UN Group in Brussels, and has reportedly sent such a request. Michaeli also told Ambassador Schulte that Spain took an unfriendly stance in a subsequent EU-Vienna group meeting. (Note: According to Ireland, the EU had made a decision on this matter years ago to allow Israel's participation in WEOG only for electoral purposes. End note).

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Next Steps

¶5. (C) Ambassador Schulte proposed that the Australian WEOG Chair explore with Israel the "modalities" on Middle East discussions referenced in its letter. Australian Charge agreed to do so and concluded that the WEOG was not prepared to make a decision, but discussions would continue on the matter. Australian Ambassador Shannon, who has been supportive of Israel's request, has since followed up with Michaeli. Michaeli also explained to Ambassador Schulte on March 11 that while Israel does not want to put it in writing, the "modalities" would consist of Israel presenting its view on Middle East GC agenda items and then leaving the room during WEOG deliberations on the subject. Michaeli will seek instructions on whether to orally brief WEOG on these "mutually agreed modalities." Shannon had suggested that Australia could circulate the Chair's understanding of "modalities" to the group.

¶6. (C) Michaeli is generally pessimistic about Israel's near-term prospects for joining the IAEA-WEOG. The question of "modalities" for discussion of Middle East issues was a pretext in his view, which may address some of the "excuses" made by some WEOG members, but deeper objections remain. He had heard that Wellington, for example, would oppose Israel's inclusion in WEOG unless Israel acceded to the NPT. Michaeli is inclined not to press the issue of Israel's membership in the IAEA-WEOG too hard, as this could close the door, but rather to take a lower profile and allow discussions to continue.

Comment

¶7. (C) WEOG members seem inclined to slow-roll any decision on Israel's membership, and any effort to force such a decision would be divisive. While Ireland and New Zealand had assured us privately that they would be more accommodating, they proceeded to raise the same objections in

the February WEOG meeting as they had in November (Ref B). Turkey is no longer objecting (they attributed their stance in November to a lack of instructions) but we are disappointed that several other WEOG members have now seconded Ireland and New Zealand. Given the unhelpful positions of some EU members, the EU is also not likely to be receptive, and WEOG supporters of Israel such as the U.S., Canada, Australia and Norway may be isolated. Mission will continue to back Israel's request for membership, in principle, but agrees that the prospects are not good. End Comment.

Israel's Letter to the IAEA-WEOG

18. (SBU) Begin text of February 14 letter to Australian WEOG Chairman, Ambassador Peter Shannon from Israeli Ambassador Michaeli:

Dear Sir,

The State of Israel wishes to become a full member of WEOG in the framework of the IAEA. As you are aware, Israel's request has been already brought to the attention and consideration of your distinguished predecessors, the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom and of the United States of America.

Israel's decision to apply for WEOG membership comes against the background of continued refusal by the MESA group, which is clearly politically motivated, to allow Israel to participate in its natural regional group.

The State of Israel already enjoys WEOG's membership in the UNGA, including the First Committee, as well as the Geneva based WIPO and CD and Vienna based Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNIDO.

We would appreciate a favorable consideration of our request by WEOG members. Israel is fully aware of the politically sensitive nature of certain topics pertaining to the Middle East under discussion and consideration in WEOG. We therefore

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wish to assure all WEOG members, through you Mr. Chairman, of Israel's willingness to accommodate possible sensitivities and concerns in this regard through mutually agreed modalities.

We would appreciate informing of this formal request by the State of Israel to all WEOG members.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

End text.

SCHULTE